

P 271058Z MAR 09 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
FAA HQ WASHDC PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5032
INFO ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 000205

DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FOR TSA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/25/2019
TAGS: FAIR ECON IV
SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE'S CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OFF COURSE

REF: ABIDJAN 625

Classified By: POL/ECON Chief for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Summary. At a recent briefing for the diplomatic community, Ivorian aviation officials discussed changes in security measures at Felix Houphouet Boigny International Airport in Abidjan. In the course of their briefing, the Ivorians repeatedly confused airport security measures with aviation safety issues. It is not clear to post that the GOCI understands the steps it needs to take to achieve a Category 1 rating from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Emboff will meet with the Director of Cote d'Ivoire's civil aviation authority (ANAC) in order to clarify this issue. End summary.

¶2. (U) On March 10, ARSO and LES staff members attended a briefing organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) regarding security measures at Abidjan's international airport. Although an MFA official chaired the meeting, the discussion was led by Mr. Jean Kouassi Abonouan, Director of ANAC.

¶3. (U) The MFA organized the meeting in order to address problems resulting from changes in security measures at the airport. The GOCI recently hired a private security company, Avisecure (a subsidiary of Skalink), to provide security at the airport. Avisecure personnel, who were not familiar with protocols regarding diplomats at the airport, had ruffled some diplomatic feathers. Abonouan promised that treatment of diplomats would improve.

¶4. (U) The meeting covered issues such as airport access-control procedures, lost luggage, and the airport's access-badging system. Ivorian officials noted that a more secure smart-card system would replace the current badge system within 6 to 12 months. They also provided meeting participants with a copy of a directive, dated January 12, 2009, concerning control of access to various areas of the airport. Ivorian officials, including Abonouan, repeatedly stated that they were making these changes in airport security in order to upgrade Cote d'Ivoire's FAA rating from Category 2 to Category 1.

¶5. (C) It is post's understanding that airport security and the FAA rating are separate issues, and that airport security does not have a bearing on the FAA rating. Post noted in reftel that Minister of Transportation Toikeusse seemed to confuse airport security and aviation safety issues during his September 2008 meeting with the Ambassador. During that meeting, the Ambassador offered assistance in facilitating GOCI discussions with the FAA regarding Cote d'Ivoire's Category 2 status. She reiterated her offer in a November 3, 2008, letter to Toikeusse. Thus far, neither the Transportation Ministry nor ANAC has responded to the Ambassador's offer. Econoff will meet with Kouassi to help clarify that, though laudable, improvements in airport security will not affect Cote d'Ivoire's FAA rating.

NESBITT